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(19) (CA) APPLICATION FOR CANADIAN PATENT (12)

(54) Antibacterial Composite Non-Woven Fabric and Method of Manufacturing the Same

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(30) (JP) Hei 5-284950 1993/11/15

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Notice: This application is as filed and may therefore contain an incomplete specification.



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Canada

ANTIBACTERIAL COMPOSITE NON-WOVEN FABRIC
AND METHOD OF MANUFACTURING THE SAME

Abstract of the Disclosure

Composite non-woven fabrics are disclosed. The
5 fabrics comprise at least a first ply that is an
antibacterial fibrous web, and a second ply comprising a
web of non-woven non-antibacterial fibers serving as a
"base structure" providing strength and dimensional
10 stability to the fabric. Each ply adheres strongly to
adjacent plies of the fabric by inter-entanglement of
the fibers in the respective layers with each other,
which defines an intensity gradient of antibacterial
property across the thickness dimension of the fabric.
15 The fabrics can be made sufficiently soft and mild for
skin contact, and have many uses such as in clothing,
medical fabrics, sheets, and the like. The fabrics have
the same or a lesser amount of antibacterial fibers than
prior-art non-woven antibacterial fabrics without
20 adversely affecting strength, dimensional stability, or
antibacterial efficacy.

ANTIBACTERIAL COMPOSITE NON-WOVEN FABRIC
AND METHOD OF MANUFACTURING THE SAME

Field of the Invention

The present invention relates to non-woven
5 fabrics having particular utility in clothing, medical
bandages and wipes, bedding, and the like.

Background of the Invention

Antibacterial fabrics have achieved widespread
use in various articles including socks, underwear,
10 diapers, bandages, and other uses, and in recent years
has been under development as a measure to counter MRSA
(methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*).

However, technical problems remain to be solved
with respect to lowering the cost and increasing the
15 stability of such fabrics, particularly for general use
in disposable products, and for ensuring adequate safety
and efficacy when used in products intended for skin-
contact use. With respect to safety, fibers containing
Ag-zeolites, Zr-zeolites or a stable distribution of
20 chitosan particles as effective antibacterial agents,
have been shown to be safe and efficacious.

Unfortunately, conventional antibacterial fibers
as described above are expensive. Moreover, non-woven
fabrics constructed using such fibers alone must have an
25 increased basis weight in order to provide the fabric
with sufficient strength for their intended use.
Increasing the basis weight results in a further
unacceptable increase in cost of the fabrics.

According to the prior art, attempts have been
30 made to provide a suitably strong non-woven fabric with
an acceptable antibacterial property, but with little
success. In particular, antibacterial fibers have been
uniformly mixed with other suitable lesser expensive
fibers lacking an antibacterial property, then laid to
35 form a non-woven fabric. In such a case, the proportion
of antibacterial fibers in the mixture needs to be
higher than about 50 % to provide the non-woven fabric
with sufficient strength for practical use.

Unfortunately, a corresponding proportion of about 50 % antibacterial fibers is insufficient to provide an effective antibacterial property to the fabric.

Summary of the Invention

5 The aforementioned shortcomings of the prior art are cured by antibacterial composite non-woven fabrics according to the present invention. The fabrics have multiple layers including at least one antibacterial web layer comprising antibacterial fibers, and at least one
10 non-antibacterial web layer comprising non-antibacterial fibers. Each layer adheres strongly to the adjacent layer(s) by inter-entanglement of the fibers in the respective layers with each other. Fiber inter-entanglement also defines an intensity gradient of
15 antibacterial property across the thickness dimension of the composite non-woven fabric.

 Antibacterial composite non-woven fabrics according to the present invention exhibit strong antibacterial action and can have a softness suitable
20 for human-skin contact.

 The antibacterial action of the fabrics is high relative to prior-art fabrics containing a uniform mixture of antibacterial and non-antibacterial fibers, even though fabrics according to the present invention
25 can have a relative amount of antibacterial fibers no greater than the relative amount of antibacterial fibers found in said prior-art fabrics. Thus, fabrics according to the present invention have an advantageous lower cost without a sacrifice of strength or
30 antibacterial efficacy.

 It is thus an object of the present invention to provide an improved antibacterial non-woven fabric which is capable of exhibiting effective antibacterial action during practical use while maintaining physical
35 properties such as softness, strength, and dimensional stability, particularly in a fabric configuration that utilizes a relatively small amount of the antibacterial fibers.

Brief Description of the Drawings

FIG. 1A is a schematic elevational view of a fabric according to the present invention having a single antibacterial layer superposed on a single non-antibacterial layer, wherein the fibers of said layers are inter-entangled at an interface zone between the layers.

FIG. 1B is a representative plot of the mean effective concentration of antibacterial agent as a function of distance through the thickness dimension of the fabric of FIG. 1A.

FIG. 2 is a side elevational schematic view of a two-ply antibacterial composite fabric as described in Example 1, wherein "P" denotes a polynosic fibrous web layer containing chitosan, and "Q" denotes a polypropylene thermal-bonded non-woven fibrous web layer.

FIG. 3 is a side elevational schematic view of a three-ply antibacterial composite fabric as described in Example 2, wherein "P" and "Q" denote fibrous web layers as described above in FIG. 2.

FIG. 4 is a side elevational schematic view of a three-ply antibacterial composite fabric as described in Example 4, wherein "P" denotes a fibrous web layer as described above in FIG. 2, "R" denotes a polypropylene spun-bonded non-woven fibrous web layer, and "S" denotes a polyester fibrous web layer containing Ag-zeolites.

Detailed Description

The present invention relates to an economical composite non-woven fabric that has suitable structural stability and antibacterial efficacy. The antibacterial non-woven fabric can be advantageously used in various articles such as medical bandages, sheets, clothing, antibacterial wipes, facing sheets for sanitary products, and analogous articles useful for inhibiting spread of infection.

The fabric comprises an antibacterial web layer comprising antibacterial fibers and a non-antibacterial

web layer comprising non-antibacterial fibers. The antibacterial and non-antibacterial web layers are "integrated" (i.e., made to adhere strongly to each other) by inter-entanglement of the fibers in adjoining layers with each other. The degree of inter-entanglement is greatest at layer interfaces. Thus, a gradient of antibacterial efficacy is defined in the thickness dimension of the composite non-woven fabric. I.e., antibacterial efficacy is highest at the major surface of the antibacterial web layer, and progressively weakens through the thickness dimension of the fabric.

The non-antibacterial web layer serves a "base structure" for the fabric. I.e., the non-antibacterial web layer contributes substantial strength, softness, and dimensional stability to the fabric. The antibacterial web layer, while also contributing strength and dimensional stability, also provides an ability of the fabric to kill bacteria contacting the antibacterial web layer or attempting to pass through it.

The antibacterial and non-antibacterial fibers are inter-entangled with each other at layer interfaces by means such as water-entanglement so that the composite non-woven fabric exhibits overall physical properties as a unitary non-woven fabric. Even though the composite non-woven fabric preferably contains 50 % or less of the antibacterial fibers, the fabric exhibits an antibacterial efficacy that is comparable to that of a non-woven fabric comprised entirely of antibacterial fibers. This is because, inter alia, at least a portion (preferably at or near a major surface) of the thickness dimension of the fabric comprises 100 % antibacterial fibers.

A schematic cross-section of a representative non-woven fabric 10 according to the present invention is shown in FIG. 1A. The fabric 10 comprises an antibacterial web layer 12 superposed on a non-

antibacterial web layer 14. The non-antibacterial web layer 14 functions as a base structure for the fabric 10, as described above. The antibacterial and non-antibacterial web layers 12, 14 are strongly adhered to each other by inter-entanglement of the fibers of both layers with one another in an interface zone 16 situated in the thickness dimension of the fabric between a first major surface 18 and a second major surface 20. As shown in FIG. 1B, entanglement of the fibers in the interface zone 16 effectively creates a gradient of antibacterial action through the thickness dimension from a to b.

For comparison purposes, non-woven fabrics comprising antibacterial and non-antibacterial fibers uniformly distributed therein according to the prior art exhibit antibacterial properties as shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Proportion of antibacterial fibers	Proportion of non-antibacterial fibers	Antibacterial property
20	80	X
40	60	X ~ Δ
60	40	Δ ~ O
80	20	O
100	0	●

- X antibacterial property is absent
 Δ antibacterial property is slightly present
 O antibacterial property is present
 ● antibacterial property is intensely present

If a non-woven fabric comprised predominantly of antibacterial fibers according to the prior art is to maintain satisfactory physical properties, it needs to have a basis weight of at least 60 g/m².

In contrast, a composite non-woven fabric according to the present invention can have an overall basis weight of substantially less than 60 g/m² (such as

40 g/m², including 15 g/m² of antibacterial fibers and the remaining weight provided by the base structure) while still exhibiting an antibacterial efficacy substantially equal to that of the prior-art non-woven fabric. Thus, in fabrics according to the present invention, the amount of the antibacterial fibers can be reduced to about 1/4 the amount required in prior-art fabrics.

In fabrics according to the present invention, the non-antibacterial base structure can comprise synthetic fibers such as of polyester, polyethylene or polypropylene or cellulosic fibers. Preferably, the fibers in the base structure are "treated" after laying by spunbonding or thermal-bonding to form a non-woven layer, web, or ply. Preferably, but not intended to be limiting, the base structure includes cellulose spunbonded fibers (TCF manufactured by Futamura Chemical Co., Ltd.), polypropylene spunbonded fibers (manufactured by Asahi Chemical Co., Ltd. or Mitsui Petrochemical Co., Ltd.) or polypropylene thermally-bonded fibers (manufactured by Fibertech Corp. or Sandler Corp.), or mixtures thereof.

Any of various antibacterial fibers may be used to form the antibacterial layer, so long as the antibacterial fibers meet safety and efficacy requirements for use in medical or sanitary articles. The preferred antibacterial fibers include, but are not limited to, synthetic fibers containing zeolite particles which incorporate zirconium (Zr) or silver (Ag) ions trapped therein, or cellulosic fibers containing chitosan particles therein, or analogous antibacterial fibers, or mixtures thereof.

To make a composite non-woven fabric according to the present invention, at least one antibacterial web and at least one non-antibacterial web are placed superposedly with respect to each other and strongly adhered to each other. Adhesion is preferably achieved by any suitable means serving to inter-entangle fibers

of adjacent layers with each other. Hydro-entanglement is preferred because it not only readily provides a desirable gradient of antibacterial efficacy through the thickness dimension of the fabric, but also can endow the fabric with good drapability. Fabrics having more than one antibacterial layer can be made, for example, by placing first and second antibacterial layers (in which the antibacterial fibers can be the same or different in each layer) on opposite major surfaces of a base-structure layer, then adhering the layers together by means such as hydro-entanglement. In any event, the resulting antibacterial composite non-woven fabric acquires at least one intensity gradient of antibacterial property extending through the thickness direction of the fabric.

A major criterion for selecting candidate fibers for the antibacterial and non-antibacterial layers is the hydrophobicity or hydrophilicity of the fibers, depending upon the intended use of the composite non-woven fabric. For example, Table 2 representatively shows a relationship between the number of layers and composition of the layers, versus the intended use of the fabric.

In Table 2, reference characters A, B, R, S, respectively, denote the following:

- A: polynosic fibers (i.e., improved viscose rayon staple fibers) containing chitosan (manufactured by Fuji Spinning Co., Ltd.)
- B: polyester fibers containing Ag-zeolites (manufactured by Kanebo Co., Ltd.)
- R: cellulose spunbonded fibers (manufactured by Futamura Chemical Corp.)
- S: polypropylene thermally-bonded fibers (manufactured by Fibertech Corp.)

5

10

Table 2

	A		B	
	Fabric construction (Layer Profile)			
	R	S	R	S
Two layers	A/R • diaper liner • topsheet R/A • food package	A/S • wipes S/A • medical drape • surgical gown • diaper liner • topsheet	B/R • topsheet • diaper liner R/B • sheet • underwear	B/S(S/B) • first-aid protect sheet
Three layers	A/R/A • wipes • gauze • underwear	A/S/A • wipes • gauze • surgical gown • medical drape • underwear	B/R/B • wipes • food package	B/S/B • first-aid protect sheet (B/S/A) • surgical gown • medical drape

15 (Notes) A/S: A on a top side
S/A: S on a top side

20 The present invention further provides a method for manufacturing the above-described composite non-woven fabric. The method comprises the steps of placing at least one non-woven web formed of antibacterial fibers superposedly on at least one non-woven web formed of non-antibacterial fibers; inter-entangling the fibers in the webs such as by pressurized water jet, thereby

25 adhering the webs together; and drying and heat-treating (if necessary) the resulting composite non-woven fabric.

Examples:

30 The present invention will hereinafter be explained in detail by way of examples.

Example 1

A carded web comprising polypropylene staple fibers (2.2 denier x 45 mm) was partially self-bonded by a heat-embossing treatment to prepare a thermally-bonded non-woven first web (basis weight 30 g/m²) intended for use as a base structure.

Antibacterial rayon (polynosic) staple fibers containing chitosan (manufactured and marketed under the trade name "Chitopoly" by Fuji Spinning Co., Ltd.) were formed by conventional means into a carded non-woven second web having a basis weight of 20 g/m².

The first web was placed on a belt conveyor comprising a 60-mesh stainless-steel net. The second web was placed superposedly on the first web. The webs were then introduced into a conventional water-entangling apparatus provided with water nozzles each having a diameter of 0.10 mm and arranged in a row extending widthwise across the webs. The nozzles were oriented at a pitch of 0.6 mm for jetting water under a pressure of 80 kg/m² to water-entangle fibers of the first web with fibers of the second web. The resulting composite non-woven fabric exiting the water-entangling apparatus was dewatered and dried by hot air. The composite non-woven fabric (designated as fabric "A" in Tables 3A and 3B, below) had a basis weight of about 50 g/m², and contained about 40 % (relative to total fibers) effective antibacterial fibers.

Fabric "A" is illustrated in FIG. 2 wherein "P" denotes the antibacterial polynosic second web and "Q" denotes the base structure (first web).

Example 2

Two separate non-woven webs of carded antibacterial staple fibers containing chitosan and each having a basis weight of 15 g/m² were placed superposedly on opposing major surfaces of a non-woven web of thermally-bonded polypropylene fibers prepared as described in Example 1. The three plies were water-entangled, dewatered, and dried by hot air as described

in Example 1 to provide an antibacterial composite non-woven fabric (designated as fabric "B" below) having a basis weight of about 60 g/m². Fabric "B" contained about 50 % (relative to total fibers) effective antibacterial fibers.

Fabric "B" is illustrated in FIG. 3 wherein "P" and "Q" are as defined in Example 1.

Comparative Example

A carded non-woven web comprising antibacterial rayon staple fibers as described in Example 1 was water-entangled, dewatered, and dried as described in Example 1 to prepare a single-ply antibacterial non-woven fabric (designated as fabric "a" below) having a basis weight of 50 g/m². Fabric "a" contained 100 % of effective antibacterial fibers.

In addition, the antibacterial rayon staple fibers described above were uniformly mixed with an equal gravimetric amount of non-antibacterial rayon fibers (1.5 denier x 35 mm) and wet laid to form a carded non-woven web. The carded web was water-entangled as described above, dewatered, then dried to provide a mixed-type non-woven fabric (designated as fabric "b" below) having a basis weight of 50 g/m².

For a control, a commercially available rayon non-woven fabric (designated as fabric "c" below) containing no antibacterial fibers was also tested.

The five non-woven fabrics (fabrics "A", "B", "a", "b" and "c") prepared as described above were tested in accordance with a method of bacteria measurement provided by the Council (Japan) of Sanitary Processing of Textile Products. The test results are shown in Tables 3A and 3B. The strain used for the test is *Staphylococcus aureus*, registration no. IF012732.

Table 3A

Non-w ven fabric	Percent antibacterial fibers	Surviving bacteria (cfu)	Log of Surviving Bacteria
A	40 %	5.13×10^3	3.71
B	50 %	4.80×10^3	3.68
a	100 %	4.52×10^3	3.65
b	50 %	6.55×10^8	8.82
c	0 %	5.43×10^8	8.74

Table 3B

Non-woven fabric	Log Kill Relative to Fabric "c"	Antibacterial effect	Dimensional stability
A	5.03	present	high
B	5.06	present	high
a	5.09	present	low (high transverse elongation)
b	0.08	absent	low (high transverse elongation)
c	-	absent	low (high transverse elongation)

The test results as shown in Tables 3A and 3B clearly indicate that Fabrics "A" and "B" according to the present invention, containing only 40 % to 50 %, respectively, of antibacterial fibers, provide an excellent antibacterial action that is comparable to the antibacterial action of conventional Fabric "a" containing 100 % antibacterial fibers. Fabric "b", containing antibacterial fibers uniformly distributed in a web of non-antibacterial fibers, exhibited substantially no antibacterial effect, even though it contained the same percentage of antibacterial fibers as Fabric "B".

Table 3B also shows that, unlike conventional fabric "a" exhibiting substantially the same

antibacterial effect, fabrics "A" and "B" according to the present invention exhibit high dimensional stability.

Example 3

- 5 A spunbonded non-woven cellulose web
(manufactured and sold under the trademark "TCF" by
Futamura Chemical Co., Ltd., and having a basis weight
of 30 g/m²) was prepared for use as a base structure.
Also, polyester fibers containing Ag-zeolites
10 (manufactured and sold under the trademark "Sanitar" by
Kuraray Co., Ltd., 1.5 denier x 45 mm) were formed into
a carded antibacterial web having a basis weight of 30 g/m².

- The spunbonded cellulose web was placed on a
belt conveyor comprising a 26-mesh plastic net. The
15 carded antibacterial web was then placed superposedly on
the spunbonded cellulose web. The webs were introduced
into a water-entangling apparatus provided with nozzles
each having a diameter of 0.15 mm and arranged in a row
widthwise across the web. The nozzles had a pitch of
20 1.0 mm and jetted water onto the webs under a pressure
of 60 kg/m² to water-entangle the fibers of the
spunbonded cellulose web and the carded web with each
other, thereby forming a composite non-woven fabric
having a number of openings therethrough.

- 25 The composite non-woven fabric was dried by hot
air. The fabric had a basis weight of about 60 g/m² and
contained about 50 % antibacterial fibers.

- The composite non-woven fabric was tested as
described in Examples 1 and 2 to ascertain the
30 antibacterial property of the fabric. The fabric
exhibited a surviving bacteria count of 2.5×10^4
(relative to 5×10^8 bacteria surviving in a control web
lacking antibacterial fibers). Thus, a satisfactory
antibacterial effect was exhibited by the composite non-
35 woven fabric.

The antibacterial composite non-woven fabric
described above was used as a topsheet for disposable
diapers. In the diapers, the polyester antibacterial

ply faced upwardly as for skin contact. In a control diaper, an apertured non-woven fabric comprising regular polyester fibers (with an antibacterial property) and having a basis weight of 30 g/m² was used as a topsheet.

5 The diapers including the antibacterial ply and the control diapers were respectively worn by 30 middle-sized infants to conduct a comparative test. At the conclusion of the test, the sample diapers were preferred over the comparative diapers by a ratio of 10 7:3. Also, the sample diapers provided a substantially improved protective effect against diaper rash compared to control diapers.

Thus, antibacterial composite non-woven fabrics according to the present invention are capable of 15 providing antibacterial characteristics sufficient for any of various practical uses, even when the fabrics contain 50 % or less antibacterial fibers, without substantial loss of various physical properties, such as strength, dimensional stability, and "hand," required 20 for a non-woven fabric. Fabrics according to the present invention can be advantageously utilized in any of various uses which require an antibacterial characteristic as well as softness. Such uses include, but are not limited to, medical articles, sanitary 25 articles, wipes and the like.

Example 4

A base structure was prepared comprising polypropylene spunbonded fibers (manufactured by Asahi Chemical and having a basis weight of 12 g/m²).

30 A first non-woven antibacterial web layer was formed comprising carded polynosic fibers and chitosan (manufactured and sold under the trademark "Chitopoly" by Fuji Spinning Co., Ltd.). The fibers were 2.2 denier x 45 mm, and the web layer had a basis weight of 35 30 g/m².

A second non-woven antibacterial web layer was formed comprising carded polyester fibers and Ag-zeolites (manufactured and sold under the trademark

"Saniter" by Kuraray Co., Ltd.). The fibers were 1.5 denier x 35 mm, and the web layer had a basis weight of 25 g/m².

5 The first non-woven antibacterial web layer was laminated to a first major surface of the base structure by hydro-entanglement as described in Example 1. The second non-woven antibacterial web layer was similarly laminated to a second major surface of the base structure. The resulting composite fabric, shown
10 schematically in FIG. 4, had a basis weight of 70 g/m². (In FIG. 4, "P" denotes the first antibacterial web layer, "S" denotes the second antibacterial web layer, and "R" denotes the base structure.

15 An "undershirt" garment was made using this composite non-woven fabric, wherein the "P" layer (which is hydrophilic and non-irritating to skin), faced inwardly toward the wearer's skin, and the "S" layer (which is strongly antibacterial) faced outwardly. Such garments were test-worn for two days by a group
20 consisting of three men and three women. For comparison purposes, conventional knitted cotton undershirts were test-worn as controls for two days by a separate group consisting of three men and three women. At the end of the two-day test period, all shirts were considered
25 soiled, but odor was present only in the control shirts. In addition, whereas all persons wearing the control shirts complained of an "unpleasant" feeling while wearing the shirts, only one person wearing a shirt made according to the present invention reported any
30 unpleasantness.

While the invention has been described in connection with preferred embodiments and examples, it will be understood that the invention is not limited to those embodiments and examples. On the contrary, the
35 invention is intended to encompass all alternatives, modifications, and equivalents as may be included within the spirit and scope of the invention as defined by the appended claims.

FIG. 1A

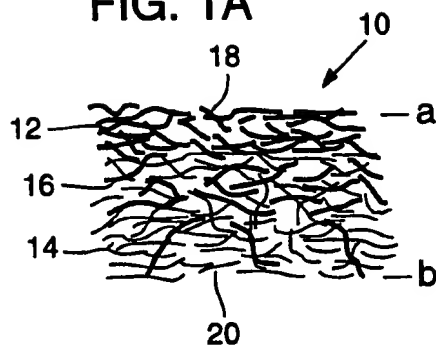


FIG. 1B

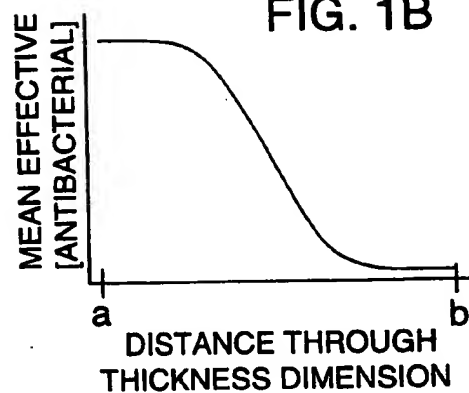


FIG. 2

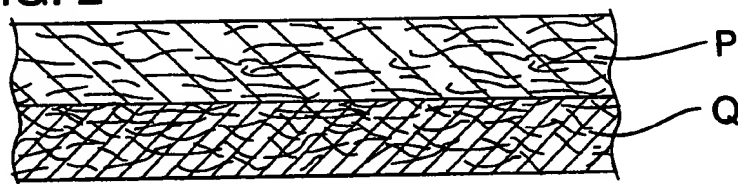


FIG. 3

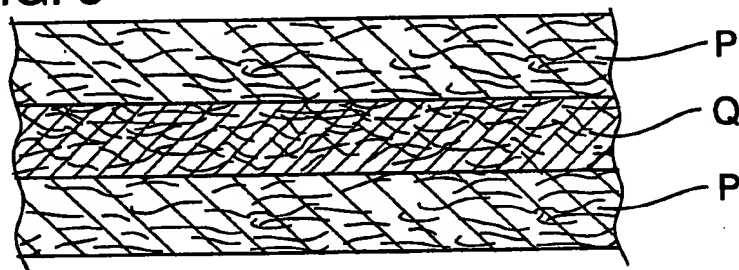
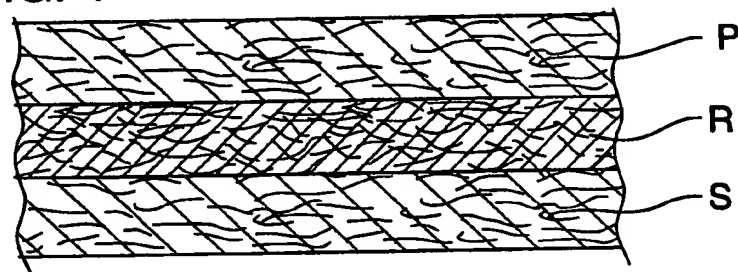


FIG. 4



The embodiments of the invention in which an exclusive property or privilege is claimed are defined as follows:

1. A composite nonwoven fabric comprising:
 - 5 a first non-woven web layer comprising antibacterial fibers; and
 - a second non-woven web layer comprising non-antibacterial fibers, the second web layer being situated superposedly with respect to the first web
 - 10 layer and contacting the first web layer at an interface zone between the first and second web layers, the fabric having a thickness dimension extending through the first web layer, the second web layer, and the interface zone;
 - 15 the fibers of the first and second web layers in the interface zone being inter-entangled with each other so as to define a gradient of antibacterial efficacy through the thickness dimension of the composite nonwoven fabric.
2. The composite nonwoven fabric of claim 1,
 - 20 wherein the second web layer has first and second major surfaces and the first web layer is disposed superposedly on the first major surface, the fabric further comprising a third web layer comprising antibacterial fibers, the third web layer being disposed
 - 25 superposedly on the second major surface.
3. The composite nonwoven fabric of claim 1 wherein the first web layer comprises synthetic fibers comprising Ag- or Zr-zeolite particles.
4. The composite nonwoven fabric of claim 1
 - 30 wherein the first web layer comprises cellulosic fibers comprising chitosan particles.
5. The composite nonwoven fabric of claim 1 wherein the second web layer comprises fibers selected from a group consisting of synthetic polymeric and
 - 35 cellulosic fibers.
6. A diaper comprising the composite nonwoven fabric of claim 1.

7. An article of clothing comprising the composite nonwoven fabric of claim 1.

8. A medical bandage comprising the composite nonwoven fabric of claim 1.

5 9. An antibacterial sheet comprising the composite nonwoven fabric of claim 1.

10. A food package comprising the composite nonwoven fabric of claim 1.

10 11. A method for manufacturing an antibacterial composite nonwoven fabric, comprising the steps of:

(a) providing a first non-woven web comprising antibacterial fibers;

(b) providing a second non-woven web comprising non-antibacterial fibers;

15 (c) placing the first web superposedly on a major surface of the second web so as to define an interface zone between the first and second webs; and

(d) inter-entangling fibers of the first and second webs with each other in the interface zone sufficiently to adhere the first and second webs to each other to form the antibacterial composite non-woven fabric.

25 12. The method of claim 11 wherein the composite non-woven fabric has a thickness dimension and step (d) inter-entangles the fibers of the first and second webs sufficiently to form a gradient of antibacterial activity through the thickness dimension.

13. The method of claim 11 including the step, after step (d), of drying the composite nonwoven fabric.

30 14. The method of claim 13 including the step, after drying, of heat-treating the composite nonwoven fabric.

15. The method of claim 11, wherein, in step (b), the second web comprises cellulosic non-antibacterial fibers, the second web exhibiting wet-stability.

16. The method of claim 11, wherein, in step (b), the second web comprises spunbonded

polypropylene non-antibacterial fibers.

17. The method of claim 11, wherein, in step (b), the second web comprises thermally bonded polypropylene non-antibacterial fibers.

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